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## NOTES ON OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

## II. SAUL.

TIME and tradition have not dealt kindly with the memory of the first king of Israel. Textual confusion has given him a paltry two years' reign (1 Sam. xiii. 1), and editorial theory has made him rejected but a short while after his accession (xiii. 8-14). Throughout, the priestly or prophetic party are against him, and one is almost inclined to feel that tradition is having its revenge upon Saul for the wickedness of the people in desiring a king. The greater part of the life-history of Saul is bound up either with Samuel or with David. He is overshadowed, in the one case, by the seer and prophet who ranks with Moses and Elijah; in the other, by the youth who is one day to reign over his kingdom. So, Saul is not represented in a favourable light: he is petulant, mad with insane jealousy, treacherous and ungrateful, and plays a sorry part by the side of the austere Samuel or the gracious David. In the few chapters where Saul is not made subservient to these two we gain, I think, a more pleasing picture of the king. That he was at heart a devout worshipper of Yahweh appears, for example, in 1 Sam. xiv. 35, where he builds his *first* altar to Yahweh. That he was brave and courageous—even in death—is familiar to every one, and the hold he had upon the people's heart comes out clearly in the well-known quotation from the Book of Jashar (2 Sam. i). This essentially secular passage testifies to the feeling of gratitude which the people had for the hero who delivered them from the Philistines and enriched them with the booty of war; Saul and his son Jonathan are a heroic pair, who were not to be divided even in death—a very different picture from what some of the preceding chapters would have led one to expect, and pleasing in its obvious simplicity. In point of fact, the really genuine old narratives relating to the history of Saul and his kingdom are lamentably few, and such as they are—e. g. his wars (xiv. 47 sq.)—have to be carefully examined.

For the earlier part of his life critics are now tolerably agreed that the only historical passages are to be found in 1 Sam. ix-x. 16, xi, xiii (omitting vers. 7 *b*-15 *a*) and xiv. That even the older portions are not free from serious difficulties is recognized, and helpful solutions have been proposed. In xiii it is evident that two situations are

represented. In one (*a*) the Philistines have invaded Israel, and are encamped in Michmash; the Israelites are put to flight, and take refuge across the Jordan in rocks and holes. Saul alone with a small band remains in Gilgal (xiii. 5-7). In the other (*b*) Saul is operating with a still smaller body of six hundred men at Gibeah (cp. xiii. 15 *b*-16), clearly an excessively small number of men to put the Philistines to flight. H. P. Smith (*Sam.*, p. 94), who has not failed to recognize this absence of homogeneity in xiii, accordingly proposes to treat the whole of vers. 4-15 *a* as an excerpt from a different source. But it is preferable to consider the situation in connexion with xiv, where it appears probable that the same twofold representation can be traced. For, as a careful comparison of the two chapters shows, the great Philistine invasion and the consequent flight of the people<sup>1</sup> presents a state of affairs which agrees very well with the notice of the marauding bands in xiii. 17 sq., and implies that the enemy had practically taken possession of the country. The obscure account of the lack of arms in Israel (xiii. 19-22) is not altogether strange in such a context, and the general effect goes to suggest that it is most unlikely that Jonathan's exploit (xiv. 1 sqq.) is associated with it in any way. In the latter, the rival camps are at Michmash and Geba, and Saul is at Gibeah surrounded by his six hundred men and the representatives of the priests (ver. 3, cp. xiii. 15). Jonathan, accompanied by his armour-bearer, proposes to make an attack upon the Philistine garrison, and intends to take the first words of the watchmen as an omen. "If they say, 'Come up,' we will go up, for Yahweh hath delivered them into our hand." The Philistine's challenge is the required sign, and the two Hebrews throw the garrison into confusion (xiv. 1-13). Only ver. 11 *b* reads strangely in its present connexion; the Philistines, before replying, cry to one another: "Behold, the Hebrews are come forth from the holes where they hid themselves." This can only be a reference to xiii. 6, which belongs to (*a*); and it does not seem rash to look for further traces of this situation in the chapter. These are perhaps to be found in vers. 21 sq., the return of the fugitives, and in the general impression given by the narrative<sup>2</sup>.

If the account of Jonathan's exploit (xiv. 1-11 *a*, 12, 13 . . . ?) reflects a situation corresponding to (*b*), the rest of the narrative allows one to gain some idea of the sequel to (*a*). The great fight in which Israel

<sup>1</sup> One is reminded of the situation after the fight on Mount Gilboa.

<sup>2</sup> Ad. Lods, too, has found evidence of conflation and composition in ch. xiv (see *Études de Théologie*, &c., Paris, 1901, pp. 259-284). Budde's objections ignore historical difficulties, and arise from an uncompromising retention of a hard-and-fast theory of the literary sources.

was victorious was evidently an earthquake: there was a quaking in the land "among all the people, the garrison (gloss to connect with *a*), and the spoilers (cp. xiii. 17), they also trembled" (ver. 15)<sup>1</sup>. Their ranks were broken; the Hebrews who had been pressed into the service of the Philistines deserted and clustered around Saul, and the enemy were routed to a point beyond Beth-horon (so ver. 23). That one of Joshua's great battles reads like a reflection of this event has suggested itself also to H. P. Smith (*O. T. History*, p. 82)<sup>2</sup>, and it is a valuable gain to find some historical foundation for what has frequently been regarded as untrustworthy romance (Josh. x). It is an interesting detail that the Book of Jashar should be quoted here also (x. 12 sq.), since it is to the same source that we are indebted for another valuable sidelight upon the character of Saul (2 Sam. i). The original continuation of the narrative in 1 Sam. xiv has perhaps been expanded. The story of the violation of Saul's tabu by Jonathan (vers. 24-35) opens in the LXX with an introductory description, "And Israel was with Saul, about ten thousand men, and the battle was spread over Mount Ephraim<sup>3</sup>." Again, in ver. 31, there is another description: "And they smote on that day among the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon" (or with Lucian's text, "more than at Michmash"). Still proceeding, it is not until after another diversion that Saul proposes to go down by night and spoil the already smitten Philistines (ver. 36), and it seems far from unlikely that interpolation is responsible for the present form of Saul's great fight<sup>4</sup>. One remarkably interesting piece of information is the account of the first altar Saul built unto Yahweh (ver. 35). It is one which we could ill spare, and the words, "Roll ye (ללו ver. 33) a great stone," suggest that the scene was originally laid in Gilgal. The erection of this altar is not merely an episode in the pursuit of the Philistines, but more probably a memorial of his great victory (cp. Exod. xvii. 15)<sup>5</sup>.

This theory of a twofold situation finds subsidiary support elsewhere. ix. 16 states that the Philistines are oppressing the Israelites,

<sup>1</sup> Whence the obscure יררי in xiii. 7 has perhaps arisen.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. *J. Q. R.*, 1904, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> The rest of this verse may have been "Saul sinned a great sin (or perhaps rather 'had laid a great tabu') on that day" (see H. P. Smith, Budde).

<sup>4</sup> For analogous cases, where editors have inserted passages by means of brief topographical introductions, cp. 2 Sam. xv. 18, 23, 30; xix. 15 sq., 24, 31, 40 (see *A. J. S. L.*, XVI, pp. 161 sq., 169 sqq.).

<sup>5</sup> It perhaps came after ver. 23 *a*, where the day's work is summed up, vers. 31-34 are probably an aetiological legend; cp. again incidents in the story of Joshua (ch. iv; origin of the name Gilgal).

and that Yahweh will send a deliverer. This can be no other than Saul, and therefore *not* his son Jonathan, whatever the sequel of the latter's exploit may have been. But xiii. 3 apparently anticipates the feat (Geba, not Michmash), and if xiii. 4 inconsistently ascribes it to Saul, this is only what Samuel's charge (x. 5 *a*) would lead us to expect<sup>1</sup>. These charges are so complete that the allusion to the Philistines can scarcely be pointless. Thus, we read here (*a*) the place where the lost asses are to be found (x. 2), (*b*) the meeting with the men who are going up to Bethel, probably an allusion to xi (cp. xi. 4, and see below), (*c*) a reference to the Philistines (ver. 5 *a*), (*d*) the meeting with the band of prophets (vers. 5 *b*, 6), cp. vers. 10-13, and finally (*e*) the order to go down to Gilgal (ver. 8), which is the preparation for xiii. 8-15. That the last is a gloss is generally admitted, but it seems highly probable that the charges have at least been expanded from time to time<sup>2</sup>. It has been held by some that the whole account of Saul's introduction to Samuel is younger than xiii and xiv, and certainly the part which the seer plays in the account of Jabesh-Gilead (xi), at all events, is very clearly due to later redaction. Further, there is the familiar difficulty that Saul, who appears as a young and inexperienced youth in ch. ix, suddenly has a grown-up son in xiii-xiv. When these points are taken into consideration it seems probable that Jonathan's exploit is foreign to the earliest account of the defeat of the Philistines by Saul<sup>3</sup>. We have good reason to infer from the Book of Jashar that Jonathan on many an occasion distinguished himself valiantly, and this exploit of his was no doubt only one of many; we know that "there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul."

<sup>1</sup> The verse begins: "After that thou shalt come to 'Gibeah of God,' where is the governor (?) of the Philistines, and let it come to pass when thou art come thither —" the remaining words are an introduction to x. 10-13.

<sup>2</sup> For an analogous example of such amplification, cp. 1 Kings xix. 15 sq. the charge given to Elijah to anoint Hazael and Jehu, which anticipates what really belonged to the career of Elisha.

<sup>3</sup> xiv. 23 b-30, 36-45 (46) betray the Saul who in his hour of victory was ready to sacrifice his son; tradition has sought to anticipate his attempt upon Jonathan's life (xx. 30-34). The episode requires the introductory note ver. 3, ver. 17 links Jonathan's exploit to the main narrative. The tradition gives effect to a popular feeling; Saul's vow (as H. P. Smith points out) was not ill-advised or arbitrary from the religious point of view. But the question is whether the deliverer of Israel freed the people in the manner described in xiv. 15-46, or whether later tradition has not obscured and expanded the original sequence of events.

As regards the freeing of Jabesh-Gilead from Nahash king of Ammon by Saul (xi. 1-11) it is held that originally Samuel found no place<sup>1</sup>. It has been remarked by others that this is the simplest and most natural account of Saul's rise, and the *naïve* introduction, x. 27 *b*, "and it came to pass after a month" (so LXX), is probably redactional. It has also been observed that it is by mere chance that the opportunity presented itself to Saul. Messengers were sent from Jabesh-Gilead throughout Israel, and when they reached "Gibeah of Saul" (proleptic) they made no inquiry for Saul, simply because they were not seeking him. The conjecture (above) that x. 3 sq. is to be associated with this, presupposes that, according to another tradition, Saul was on his way home, and met the men proceeding to Bethel. Both traditions have been modified, with the result that in xi. 4 the reader is expected to assume that the messengers were seeking the anointed king in the city which was to bear his name, and that in x. 3 sq. they had come to make him a present of bread and wine, apparently as a solemn offering or sacrificial feast.

The resemblance between the achievement in x, and some of the stories of the "Judges" is particularly striking; and had Saul lived in that period we should have expected him to become head or chief of Jabesh-Gilead. But if Saul is the last of the judges he is also the first of the kings, and we are now in a position to conclude that the oldest surviving traditions ascribed to Saul two great deeds—the freeing of Gilead, an event of local importance, and the defeat of the Philistines, an achievement which affected the very existence of Israel.

The belief that the Philistine oppression was subsequent to the defeat of Ammon, or was occasioned by Saul's attempt to establish a kingdom, is contrary to the tradition. Whatever may have been the true history of this early period, Saul, it was believed, owed his position to the fact that he was chosen by Yahweh to deliver Israel. The Philistines had long laid Israel under their yoke, and the people in their distress had cried unto Yahweh, and he had regarded their affliction (ix. 16). It may be objected that this represents a position of hopeless weakness which is not borne out by other passages<sup>2</sup>, but it corresponds accurately with the older situation reflected in xiii-xiv. The most serious difficulty is to find an explanation of the invasion of the Philistines; all attempts to bring it into touch with preceding narratives being practically failures<sup>3</sup>. It is assumed that after the

<sup>1</sup> The mention of Judah, too, in ver. 8 is due to a gloss.

<sup>2</sup> e. g. ix. 1-14, where Saul wanders around the land accompanied only by one servant.

<sup>3</sup> Note that vii. 13 sq., the final subjugation of the Philistines, is late.

ark was brought to Kirjath-jearim a wave of oppression swept over the country, Shiloh was destroyed, and the power of Israel was broken; and it is observed that the establishment of a Philistine governor (or garrison) at Gibeah in Benjamin clearly indicates the extent of the Philistine supremacy. But this does not solve the problem. Jeremiah seems to speak of the fall of Shiloh as a comparatively recent event; and one Philistine governor or garrison is hardly enough to account for the oppression from which Israel is suffering (ix. 16). All the historians recognize the difficulty; and, unless one is prepared to assume that there is an unaccountable gap in the narratives, no effort must be spared to discover the prelude.

The events which chronologically precede Saul's deliverance of Israel from the Philistine yoke cannot be traced either in 1 Samuel or in the Appendix to the Book of Judges. Samson, it is true, is said to have *begun* to free Israel; but he was a Judæan or Danite hero, and his exploits would not affect Israel<sup>1</sup>. It is only when we reach the story of Jephthah and the introductory passage (x. 6-xii. 7) that we meet the required situation, and it seems justifiable to argue that the story of Saul's victories over Ammon and over the Philistines were once the immediate sequel to that extremely obscure introduction. The removal of all the narratives between Judg. xi and 1 Sam. ix will naturally strike the reader as exceedingly bold. As far as the *literary analysis* is concerned, it may be observed that Judges xvii-xxi is an appendix added to the book by one of the latest redactors, that the story of Samuel's youth has been written to form an introduction to the history of Eli and his sons, and that vii is of even later origin. For equally serious changes one may point to Num. x. 29, which resumes JE's narratives after Exod. xxxiv. 28, and to the insertion of the Elijah and Elisha narratives in 1-2 Kings. It need scarcely be said that the interpolated matter is not necessarily later than its new context. The *historical contents* of the intervening chapters in Judges and 1 Samuel will be considered later.

Judges x. 6-18 is an "Introduction to the History of the Oppression of Israel by the Ammonites and the Philistines" (G. F. Moore). It is a preface to a new oppression, and in its present form is extremely complicated. How much of it is Deuteronomic and how much belongs to an earlier writer (there are affinities with Joshua xxiv and 1 Sam. vii, xii) it is difficult to determine. It has references which as they stand are out of place, and allusions which it is impossible to trace in the immediately following story of Jephthah. The affinities with 1 Sam. vii are, in their turn, interesting, inasmuch

<sup>1</sup> Besides, Judges xiii. 5 b is probably a gloss.

as this chapter describes an overwhelming defeat of the Philistines which, on historical and literary grounds, has been rejected. Certainly, as regards the literary analysis, this abruptly introduced chapter (vii) finds no place in the older account of the history of Israel, but it is exceedingly improbable that it is wholly an invention. It seems to be a later story of the conclusion of the great oppression which Judges x. 6-18 introduces, and ascribes to Samuel, the theocratic ruler, what the older history ascribed to Saul. The narrative may or may not be based upon one of Saul's battles, but that it is deliberately intended to ignore Saul seems almost certain<sup>1</sup>. Even as the earlier Introduction to the Philistine and Ammonite oppression in Judges x. 6-18 finds its conclusion in Saul, so we may believe that the later hand who has worked upon it intended it to introduce his readers to that period of history which concluded with Samuel's victory at Eben-ezer. The later and the earlier redactions of the Introduction imply later and earlier narratives respectively. Apart from the literary affinities between the two which have been noticed by the commentators, it may be added that when mention is made of the "eighteen years'" oppression (Judges x. 8) one thinks of the "twenty years" that all the house of Israel lamented(?) after Yahweh (1 Sam. vii. 2), and when the climax is reached and the Introduction relates that the Israelites were assembled and encamped at Mizpah, one is at once reminded of Samuel's summons, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah" (1 Sam. vii. 5).

As regards the Ammonite oppression, it is tempting to suppose that Jephthah's defeat of the Ammonites was the occasion for Nahash's subsequent revenge. Jephthah was made chief of all the inhabitants of Gilead—possibly at Jabesh<sup>2</sup>—and that the children of Ammon meditated vengeance at the first opportunity is only to be expected. As regards the Philistine oppression, we note the interesting statement (Judges x. 8) that some foe crushed "all the Israelites who were across the Jordan in the land of the Amorites who were in Gilead." This can scarcely apply to the Ammonites who, curiously enough, are said to have made war on the west of the Jordan (contrast the position in Judges xi); but it is precisely the plight of the Israelites when Saul prepared to drive out the Philistines (1 Sam. xiii. 7). The words appear to be a trace of the oldest account which has been postulated in 1 Sam. xiii-xiv. Next, the penitent cry of the Israelites (Judges x. 10) and Yahweh's refusal to hear them culminates in fresh signs of

<sup>1</sup> Observe how even in 1 Sam. xiv we hear more of Jonathan than of Saul.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of *בְּלִי יִשְׁבִי גִלְעָד*, was it originally *יִשְׁבִי גִלְעָד* (x. 18, xi. 8)? Cp. for a somewhat similar emendation 1 Kings xvii. 1.



penitence, "then they put away the foreign gods from among them, and served Yahweh, and he could bear the misery of Israel no longer" (vers. 13-16). The immediate sequel of this is wanting, but, as Moore remarks, it must have been followed by the raising up of the deliverer. Obviously we have a deliverer in Jephthah, but his is a local story; Gilead's misfortunes would scarcely account for the penitence of the people of Israel. But when we turn to the history of Saul it is impossible not to be struck by Yahweh's words to Samuel: "He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines: for I have seen the affliction of my people, for their cry is come unto me" (1 Sam. ix. 16)<sup>1</sup>. Many obscure points still remain, but if the attempt is to be made to discover the background to this Introduction it may perhaps be enough to indicate what seems to have been the true sequence. One may not hope to recover all the threads of the original story; only here and there may an occasional hint be gleaned from the narrative.

The composite character of the stories of Gideon, Abimelech, and Jephthah would indicate that the work of criticism has not ceased when we recover what is supposed to have been the earlier form of the Saul-narratives. Three stages appear to be required, and only two at present have been considered. Now (1) in seeking for the *raison d'être* of the elaborate religious Introduction (Judges x), which is quite inapplicable to the story of Jephthah, it is held that we have here a preface to the period closing with 1 Sam. vii. Both, in their present form, are late, and the latter is unhistorical. (2) The late redaction of Judges x, taken with the late account of the overthrow of the Philistines in 1 Sam. vii, suggests that the Introduction in an earlier form is the prelude to some older and more historical narrative, and it is argued that the latter can only be the story of Saul. Lastly (3), at a still earlier date we may assume that the religious element was wanting, or at least less pronounced. One may compare the old story of Gideon with its additions (e.g. Judges vi. 25 sqq.), and to the twofold narratives of the exploits of Gideon and Jephthah we may find a parallel in Saul's victory (a) over Ammon, and (b) over the Philistines. The fact that Saul's successes led to the establishment of a monarchy will explain the repeated redaction which the original account of this important event has received, and will make it intelligible why in the second stage the figure of Samuel begins to attain prominence. It is suspected that Samuel once found no place in the story of Saul's rise, and this appears fairly obvious in the case of 1 Sam. xi. It is singular that in the account of the Midianite op-

<sup>1</sup> With the statement that the people were in straits (Judges x. 9) cp. 1 Sam. xiii. 6.

pression (Judges vi. 7b-10), a prophet suddenly springs up from nowhere to call the people to remember the great deeds which Yahweh did for them; denunciation and subsequent penitence are wanting, and the man of God disappears as suddenly as he came. Such a passage may once have stood in Judges x, since at some point in the development of the narrative a Samuel would certainly have been introduced to the reader. With the subsequent dislocation and redaction the figure was removed; but it is perhaps correct to believe that in the process the opportunity was taken to use his words, with necessary modification, in the opening part of the story of Gideon. The growth of the tradition between the stages is apparent from the chapters which now intervene between the Introduction and the life of Saul. Theory divided the history of Israel into a series of epoch-making ages, and at each epoch (e.g. the exodus, conquest, the era of the Judges, the monarchy), the narratives betray a strong theological colouring representing the successive steps in the development of national tradition and religious thought. So the figure of Samuel increases in grandeur until he overtops Saul, and becomes, through Yahweh, practically the founder of the monarchy. Saul is no longer the "judge" who established his might by force of arms or earned the submission of a people by warlike success; the idea of a monarchy is resented, the priesthood typified by Samuel are opposed to the innovation, and Saul, if he is a monarch, is second to this high-priest. As for the narratives which have found a place between the dates represented by the ultimate and penultimate stage, it will be recognized that the story of a Samson, even if he lived at the age of the Judges, has no literary connexion with its present context. The appendix to the Judges appears to belong to a cycle with which the story of Eli and the ark is associated, and, it will be argued subsequently, does not belong to this period. Finally, with the life of Eli is interwoven the story of the youth of Samuel, and here it will be enough for the present to quote Prof. Kent's words (*Israel's Historical and Biographical Narratives*, p. 51):—

"Tradition rarely begins with the childhood of the heroes. Jacob, Moses, and Samuel are the conspicuous Old Testament exceptions. Furthermore, stories regarding the childhood of a great man in antiquity were not appreciated, and therefore not recounted until long after he had ceased to live. In their origin they are, therefore, usually much later than those which record his life-work."

The rest of the history of Saul, as we have already observed, generally presents him in an unfavourable light. From xvi onwards it is the aim of tradition to exalt and magnify David's bravery and nobility, and to depreciate the character of Saul. The literary

analysis is admitted to be exceedingly complicated, and illustrates the gradual growth of the stories which subsequent generations loved to tell of the first great king over all Israel. But in spite of their complexity it is not easy to ignore the belief that, so far as Saul is concerned, the narratives offer popular stories rather than plain history. How utterly we are at the mercy of the writers whose only care was to preserve what interested *them* is evident from the lacunae, the puzzling gaps which the Books of Samuel do not allow us to fill up. The mysterious destruction of Shiloh, and the remarkable appearance of the priestly families at Nob, and of the guild of prophets at Naioth, are problems that evade solution unless more rigorous criticism be applied. The casual allusion to Saul's dealings with the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 2) remains one of the many puzzles of early Hebrew history, although if Nob be a corruption of Gibeon<sup>1</sup> the ground is partly cleared. If commentators have not failed to refer to Joshua ix, may one not go a step further, and call to mind the suggestion that Joshua's southern campaign has for its historical basis Saul's defeat of the Philistines? Now this campaign is so closely associated with Joshua's covenant with the men of Gibeon that it is perhaps not too hazardous to conjecture that Saul's great victory was, in like manner, brought into connexion with the Gibeonites. I merely note the coincidence, and would emphasize one important difference between the two narratives. Saul, according to 2 Sam. xxi. 2, had shed blood, and had thereby incurred blood-revenge; whereas Joshua delivered the men out of the hand of the children of Israel (Joshua ix. 26), which is a clear sign that this narrative could have told us more of the hostility of Israel had later editors left it intact. Again, it is perhaps only a coincidence, but the conclusion of Joshua's great fight with the *five* kings of the south<sup>2</sup>, and their slaughter, at once recalls Saul's defeat of the Amalekites and the sacrificial slaying of Agag. 1 Sam. xv is one of the most obscure narratives in the whole of Saul's life, and, as H. P. Smith has shown, "the character and position of Samuel as here portrayed agree closely with his picture as drawn in the life of Samuel, chapters vii, viii, and xii." How far it is historical is extremely uncertain; it can scarcely be rejected entirely; and the analogy of ch. vii alone is sufficient to warrant the conviction that a certain amount of truth underlies it. In both some historical incident has been worked up to serve a specified purpose. There is scarcely room for a defeat of the Amalekites so soon before David's victory, and they are unfortunately just the people whom it is difficult

<sup>1</sup> *Encyc. Bib.*, col. 3430.

<sup>2</sup> We may bear in mind the *five* tyrants of the Philistines.

to fix, owing to the conflicting statements in the Old Testament. The story is not wholly unfavourable to Saul. He is represented as the Lord's anointed, commissioned to take vengeance upon Amalek. The scene of the campaign agrees with 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, the motive with David's victory in xxx. 26, and the consideration which Saul shows for the Kenites is quite in harmony with the character of a king who built altars to Yahweh, and whose son Jonathan bears a name which gives expression to his religious belief. The narrator represents Samuel as a more autocratic being than even Elijah or Elisha, and, in view of the relative lateness of the chapter, the statement that Saul appears to be king over Judah need not be taken as correct. The age of Elisha is the one conspicuous early period where the prophets could make and unmake kings; and it does not seem far-fetched to suppose that among the prophetic guilds which flourished at that time there were many who believed that their political power extended back to the days of the first king of Israel. And this being so, the allusion to the Kenites (xv. 6) may not be quite meaningless: for if Jehu was indebted to Elisha, he was no less under the influence of Jehonadab the Rechabite; and if 1 Chron. ii. 55 is to be trusted, the Rechabites were related to the Kenites. More suggestive than this, moreover, is the fact (*loc. cit.*) that these were related to "the families of scribes," whose care it would be to put in writing the traditional history of their land. This highly interesting statement is surely of some importance for the history of the Israelites.

1 Sam. xv and xiii. 8-14 (an episode in the Philistine war) are stories of Saul's rejection, and this may be viewed as a slight support for the connexion (which has been hazarded above) between the slaying of Agag by Saul and of the five South Palestinian kings by Joshua. But the links are so slight that at the most a confusion of traditions in the oral, not in the literary stage, can only be postulated. On the other hand, the reference to Carmel (xv. 12) raises the question whether Samuel (like Elijah and Elisha) may not have been associated here, not with the unimportant town in the neighbourhood of Hebron, but with the more famous mountain not far remote from the closing incidents in Saul's life.

It is to be feared that it is a matter of no little difficulty sometimes to comprehend Saul's position in Gibeah, living as he was in constant danger of invasion by the Philistines. He had war against them all his lifetime (xiv. 52), and ever and again they invaded his territory, once, so the story went, to the manifest advantage of David (xxiii. 27). Retaliatory raids were made, but it is noteworthy that throughout the whole cycle of the Saul-David narratives the scene is placed in Judah and Benjamin. In connexion with this, it is to be noticed

that as the narratives proceed, Saul and David drift further and further apart, until finally in 1 Sam. xxx we have a selection from an independent story of David, whilst xxviii. 3-25, xxxi give us an equally independent story of Saul. It is here that we find David gradually strengthening his position among the elders south of Hebron, whilst Saul appears to be quite naturally located in the plain of Jezreel. Read in the light of the narratives which precede, we are to understand that on this occasion, when Saul fights his last fight against the Philistines, the king leaves Gibeah for Gilboa, and the five tyrants march northwards from their cities in order to encamp at Jezreel. Must it not be admitted that the narratives as they stand present a new difficulty? We may read between the lines, and we may assume that Saul had moved to a fresh capital; in fact, half a dozen conjectures or assumptions could be made. The historians seem to find no difficulty in the sudden shifting of the scene, or if they find it, it is ignored. Now, in the previous section reference was made to the results of Budde's investigations on the literary character of the closing chapters in 1 Samuel<sup>1</sup>. According to this scholar, xxvii, xxviii. 1, 2, xxix-xxx are Judæan; in David's life as an outlaw, apart from a few Ephraimite passages, the Judæan element predominates, whilst in the history of David at the court of Saul the source is almost wholly Ephraimite. These results sufficiently indicate in a general way the character of the chapters as a whole. The oldest source appears most distinctly at the close of 1 Samuel, where, as we have just seen, the lives of David and Saul are presented separately. To this same source Budde (it will be noticed) ascribes also xxvii and xxix, and it is precisely the latter chapter which links together the two lives. But however closely ch. xxix may be proved to be connected with its context, it is none the less embarrassing, and introduces a fresh difficulty. It is strange that David's presence was not discovered until the Philistines reached Aphek; and although David has been living under the care of Achish for some time, it only now occurs to them that this is the renowned hero of Saul's previous triumphs. The Philistine confederation was too united for us to assume that the four lords were ignorant that the fifth had had the renowned David as a vassal living at Ziklag; and if the Philistine army was large enough to inflict a crushing defeat upon Saul, and to occupy the Israelite cities, David and his six hundred men (xxx. 10) would scarcely be sufficient to turn the tide in favour of Israel.

It would certainly seem that the separate stories of Saul and David stand on a different footing, and are more trustworthy compared with those wherein their fortunes are mingled with one another

<sup>1</sup> *J. Q. R.*, XVII, p. 787 sq.

or with that great forerunner of the prophetic guilds—Samuel. A similar conclusion seemed to be reached from our study of 2 Samuel, where those narratives which presupposed an intimate relation between David and Saul's house did not appear to be from the same source as the other records of David's life. One is inclined to assume that we have a cycle of local traditions centring around Bethlehem and Benjamin. Comparative history affords many parallels.

But here we must take leave of Saul for the present. If the criticism has been destructive, it has at least brought into prominence the heroic and devout figure whose achievements move us more deeply than the pettiness of character<sup>1</sup> which looms so large through many of the apparently less authentic narratives. If we can but dimly grasp the personality of this king, we cannot, at all events, feel sufficiently grateful that the triumphant ode from the Book of Jashar has been preserved to tell us how his memory was cherished. And if a few scattered indications have been correctly interpreted, it is no slight gain to believe that Saul became the "Joshua" of the northern Hebrews (Joshua x), even as we may suspect that David was the "Joshua" of the southern (Joshua xi).

We cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that we have only what the historians, or rather, the editors, have chosen to give us. It is only by a comparative study of one king with the other, or by the welcome discovery of independent evidence, that we can comprehend the greatness of an Omri or a Jeroboam II. We know too well how apt history is to sum up the character and reign of past monarchs in a single epithet; we know also how later ages are wont to ascribe to treasured heroes of the past the legends and traditions that have grown up since their death. Allowance has to be made in two directions therefore; and as a "bloody" Queen Mary suffers in comparison with a "good" Queen Bess, so may we not feel that the Old Testament narratives, with their obvious interest for the ideal king David and for Samuel, the prototype of prophetic power, have left little room for Saul to play his part? In this early period with which we are dealing, the *quality* of the material must always be the first object of criticism. But the *quantity* must also be carefully observed; and, on reflection, it may perhaps appear extremely remarkable that we should ever possess so full and varied an account of the times of Samuel and David, whereas for the history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah our sources are relatively meagre, and,

<sup>1</sup> That this weakness and lack of virility in the Saul-David narratives has some foundation may, however, follow from a consideration of the strain of weakness which marked Saul's descendants. Neither Ishbaal nor Meribaal is represented as a sturdy or even as a pleasing figure.

with only a few brilliant exceptions, are treated from one and the same religious point of view. Of the exceptions, the most notable are the narratives relating to Solomon, and those which are woven around Elijah and Elisha. It is perhaps only a coincidence that these are associated respectively with the ideal monarchy and with the predominance of the prophets, and thus suggest the names of David and Samuel. This leads to the study of Samuel's life, and a comparison with Elijah and Elisha; and the question will arise whether the situations represented in even the older stories of Samuel naturally belong to the period covered by the close of the Judges and the institution of a Monarchy.

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